

* Page 75, July 1998 *

U.S. EPA And U.S. Department Of Energy Develops Energy Star Roof Products Program

Reflective roof materials have become a hot topic for the roofing industry in recent years. These materials can make a building more energy efficient by lowering roof temperature, reducing the amount of heat transferred into the building's interior and ultimately reducing the amount of energy needed to maintain indoor comfort. The result is lower utility bills for consumers.

Reflective roofs also help the environment. Most of the energy used to cool home and buildings in the U.S. is created by burning fossil fuels, which releases air pollution and particles that contribute to smog, acid rain, respiratory disease and global climate change. In addition, reflective roofs help mitigate the urban heat island effect. That is, they reflect some of the sun's rays, causing decreases in both surface temperature and overall air temperature in an urban area. Cooling ambient air temperature even a few degrees reduces the amount of smog that is formed through photochemical reactions. By using less energy consumers save money on utility bills while also helping prevent air pollution.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy recognize the benefits of reflective roofs and are currently developing the Energy Star Roof Products Program to help consumers understand the importance of energy efficiency. The program is projected to be launched in Fall 1998. According to Rachel Schmeltz, the EPA's Energy Star Program manager, the program will focus on the energy efficiency of roof products, and, in particular, their reflectivity.

Schmeltz explained the program has been in the development stage for approximately one year. During this process she has been working with roofing manufacturers, including several metal construction industry representatives, to design specifications and identify test methods that partner manufacturers will use to evaluate their products. Schmeltz said these guidelines will be the "meat of the program".

Manufacturers join the Energy Star program by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), after which they may place the Energy Star label on products that they have determined to meet a mutually agreed upon, performance-based, energy-efficiency specification.

Schmeltz explained that participating manufacturers can let consumers know that by purchasing an Energy Star-labeled product they will save energy, money and

the environment. The amount of savings depends on building characteristics and climate conditions. Building characteristics that result in the largest savings include attic duct location and absence of ceiling insulation. In general, buildings and homes in the U.S. Sunbelt will benefit the most from installation of a reflective roof.

Metal roof material manufacturers interested in knowing more about the Energy Star Roof

Products Program can contact Schmeltz at (202) 564-9124 or via e-mail at schmeltz.rachel@epa-mail.epa.gov.

EPA and DOE use the Energy Star label to help residential and commercial consumers quickly and easily identify products that save them money and protect the environment by saving energy. Other Energy Star programs are in place for office equipment, residential heating and cooling equip-

ment, exit signs, new homes, insulation, refrigerators, dishwashers, room air conditioners, clothes washers and residential light fixtures.